SPORTING STARS ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Current Version Valid from January 2024

To be Reviewed in January 2025

Reviewed by K.Jackson (Headteacher)

Contents

1. Aims

At Sporting Stars Academy, staff know that attending every day and arriving on time is an important part of a young person's learning.

- All young people of statutory Academy age that the Academy admits (ages 14-16) are to attend Academy consistently
- The Executive Headteacher and Headteacher will ensure that the Academy completes all registers twice daily and provides referring bodies, including the Local Authority, with daily updates

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regard to attendance through our whole Academy culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families and carers to ensure students have the support in place to attend Academy
- Promoting and supporting being punctual to lessons

We will achieve this by:

- Explaining our attendance expectations to all parents/carers and referring bodies
- Celebrating good attendance
- Providing attendance details on all progress reports
- Contacting parents/carers when no reason for absence is provided, on the first day, via telephone and/or text message
- Updating the Academy's attendance information systems daily, recording absences and late arrivals, with reasons in accordance with the Local Authority Absence Codes (as detailed below).
- Encouraging parents/carers to ensure their child is ready on time and is present at their pre-arranged pick-up point

2. Legislation and Guidance

The link between attendance and attainment is well-established. Poor attendees are at a significant disadvantage, particularly when this pattern is repeated over a long period of time. Absence from Academy is a potential safeguarding risk, and our systems are rigorous to ensure that students are kept safe. It is the responsibility of all staff at the Academy to promote good attendance through role-modelling, tracking and intervening promptly where appropriate. Good attendance should be praised just as often as poor attendance is challenged. Attendance above 96% should be considered good attendance, though 100% attendance should be an aim for as long as possible.

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve Academy attendance](#) guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [Academy attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern Academy attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)](#)
- [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the Academy census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2.1 Key Terms
The following terms are referred to in this document and when discussing attendance in person:

- Session - two attendance sessions are recorded each day. One in the morning upon entry to the Academy and one in the afternoon at the start of lesson 5
- Persistent Absence - any student whose attendance is tracking below 90% is deemed to be persistently absent, often referred to as PA

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Directors
The Directors are responsible for the following:

- Promoting the importance of attendance across the Academy's policies and ethos
- Making sure Academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance data for the whole Academy
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Shane Tudor has the responsibility for monitoring attendance as a Director

3.2 The Headteacher
The Headteacher is responsible for the following:

- Implementation of this policy at the Academy
- Monitoring Academy-level absence data and reporting it to the Directors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices when deemed necessary

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance
The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for the following:

- Leading attendance across the Academy
- Offering a clear vision for improving attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Understanding attendance data at student level
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students, parents, and carers
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher of when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Emma Tench, who can be contacted via emma.tench@sportingstarsAcademy.com or on 01782 248248.

3.4 The Attendance Officer
The Attendance Officer is responsible for the following:

- Monitoring attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to Academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the Academy system
- Transferring calls from parents/carers to the Designated Senior Leader in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Contacting all care homes when Looked After Child students have not arrived at Academy by 9.30 a.m.

The attendance officer is Michelle Simonds, who can be contacted via admin@sportingstarsAcademy.com or on 01782 248248.

3.5 Parents/Carers
Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and arrives on time
- Call the Academy to report their child's absence before 9.00 a.m. on the day of the absence, confirming the reason for the absence and advising when they are expected to return
- Provide the Academy with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
- Supply details of any other person authorised to collect their child and/or give permission for them to go home

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the Academy hours. When not possible, a letter or other documentation should be provided that details the date and time of the appointment

3.6 Students
Students are expected to:

- Attend each day and arrive on time

Post-16 students should call the Academy directly to report their nonattendance before 9:00 a.m. on the day of their absence, confirming the reason and when they expect to return

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register
The Academy will keep an attendance register onto which all students will be entered. The attendance register will be taken twice daily, once in the morning upon entry to the Academy and once in the afternoon at the start of lesson 5. The register mark will determine if each student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See *Appendix One* for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record the following:

- For students of compulsory Academy age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of the absence where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep all registers for three years after the date of entry.

Students must arrive by 9:00 a.m. each day. The morning register will be kept open until 9:30 a.m. each day. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30 p.m. and will be kept open until 1:00 p.m.

4.2 Unplanned Absence
The student's parents/carers must notify the Academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00 a.m. or as soon as practicably possible by contacting the Academy directly (*see also section 7*).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the Academy is genuinely concerned about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy will ask the student's parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card and/or other appropriate forms of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the Academy is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and the student's parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned Absence
Attending a medical or dental appointment will be marked as authorised using the M code as long as the student's parents/carers have notified the Academy in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments outside of Academy hours. Parents/carers should inform the Academy of the absence if this is not possible. Parents/carers will be asked to show the Academy any letters or appointment cards supporting the appointment. The Academy should be informed by telephone/text message for an emergency appointment, and the appointment card should be brought into the Academy upon return.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of Academy hours wherever possible. Where not possible, the student should be out of Academy for the minimum necessary time.

The student's parents/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance, as possible, of the requested absence. Section 5 contains details of which term-time absences the Academy can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality
A student who arrives late:

•   Before the register has closed will be marked as late using the L code
•   After the register has closed will be marked as absent using the U code

A late arrival disrupts the class and the learning that is taking place. Parents/carers are therefore encouraged to ensure their child is on time for their pre-arranged lift to Academy. If their child misses their pre-arranged lift, the Academy will not return to collect them, and it will be the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure they are transported into the Academy that day. Failure to attend will result in an unauthorised absence.

Where necessary, parents/carers will be supported to organise their morning preparations so that their child can arrive on time. The support provided would usually be followed by a referral to Early Help or Family Support services to help parents/carers embed a routine to maximise attendance and ensure punctuality.

Where a young person's punctuality falls below expectations:

1. We will contact the parents/carers to request improvement and provide support as required. This may include a change in transport arrangements, positive rewards for progress or work with external agencies
2. We will issue a letter to the parents/carers and provide support as required
3. We may consider a penalty notice if the student consistently arrives after the register closes

4.5 Following Up on Unexplained Absence
Where any student who we expect to attend is absent or stops attending without reason, the Academy will:

- Contact the student's parents/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If a student is working with an external agency, for example, Family Support or a Social Worker, the Academy may contact the professional to inform them of the absence. If the Academy cannot contact any of the student's emergency contacts, the Academy may conduct a home visit
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained - this will be no later than five working days
- Call the parents/carers each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the absence continues, the Academy will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer and other external agencies as deemed appropriate

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers
The Academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance on reports and during weekly phone calls completed at the end of each week during term time.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term Time Absence
The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The leave of absence will be permitted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the time the student is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as, but not limited to:

- The need for a family to spend time together because of an immediate family bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- The funeral of a family member
- A religious observance
- Transport not being provided by the Local Authority when it should have been
- Children of Service Personnel who are about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- The need to attend the wedding of a family member, with the invitation provided as evidence (one day of absence could be authorised)
- A one-off sporting event/performing arts competition with a letter provided (from the performing arts/sports regional governing body) as evidence
- The need to attend a family member's graduation ceremony/passing out parade (one day of absence could be authorised)
- Medical appointments (as noted throughout this policy, parents/carers should always try to arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of Academy hours when possible). Evidence must be provided if the appointment occurs during Academy hours. The Academy will not authorise a whole day's absence for a local medical appointment that occurs in the morning; the child would be expected to return to Academy in the afternoon

Absences will not be authorised for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Caring for other family members
- Birthdays

- To interpret for other family members
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Family holiday
- Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members
- Family anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Travel problems
- Academy refusal

The Academy will consider each application for term time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence by contacting admin@sportingstarsAcademy.com. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence. Due to the nature of our Academy, students may occasionally require a flexible timetable, particularly when they first start at the Academy; therefore, a transitional timetable may be incorporated. This will be approved only through discussion with the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher, parents/carers, and, where necessary, other professionals, e.g. virtual Academy, referring authority or social worker.

5.2 Legal Sanctions
The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child where the child is of compulsory Academy age.

If issued with a fine or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Local Authority Officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account the following:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during Academy hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Good or improving attendance is recognised and rewarded at Sporting Stars Academy. Students with exceptional attendance are rewarded each term, and a letter of acknowledgement is sent home. Incentives are used to improve attendance and encourage students to return to the Academy.

7. Attendance Monitoring

A persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of Academy, and a severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of Academy.

A high proportion of students attending Sporting Stars Academy have experienced struggles within their educational setting; this includes attendance issues. In addition, 84% of our students currently have an EHCP with social, emotional, and mental health as their primary need. Of our current cohort, 24% of our students are also looked after, and a number of them have been out of Academy for significant periods of time. As such, many of our students experience emotional barriers, including anxiety and Academy refusal; therefore, it is vital that our attendance monitoring is always reviewed at student level. Support for students struggling to attend Academy may include reintegration timetables, home tuition, and one-to-one or small group work. This is to help build their confidence and self-esteem and promote independence to help them return to full-time education.

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

Sporting Stars Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly, and annually. This is across the whole Academy and at individual student level
- Identify particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and work with external agencies to ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures and support is available

7.2 Analysing Attendance

Sporting Stars Academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their parents/carers
- Look at historical and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

Sporting Stars Academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to staff to facilitate discussions with students and parents/carers
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Sporting Stars Academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent or severe absence
- Contact the parents/carers to request improvement and offer support; this may include a reintegration or transition timetable
- Conduct a home visit to discuss the attendance issues
- Issue a letter to parents/carers to request an improvement in attendance and provide access to a broader range of support services to remove any barriers hindering attendance
- Issue a second letter inviting parents/carers to attend an attendance clinic if there is no improvement

If there is no improvement, then the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice. If attendance cannot be improved, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be advised and they will ascertain if court action is required. Each parent/guardian may be fined and/or imprisoned.

8. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Missing Children Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and will take into account guidance received from the Local Authority and/or DfE. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Directors.

Appendix One: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on Academy attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late Arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-Site Educational Activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the Academy
D	Dual Registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting Activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the Academy
V	Educational Trip or Visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved, by the Academy
W	Work Experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised Leave of Absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised Holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Academy has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/Dental Appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious Observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study Leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveler Absence	Student from a traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the Academy
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the Academy
N	Reason Not Provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised Absence	Academy is not satisfied with reason for student's absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
U	Arrival After Registration	Student arrived at Academy after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not Required to be in Academy	Student of non-compulsory Academy age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to Attend due to Exceptional Circumstances	Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on Admission Register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the Academy
#	Planned Academy Closure	Whole or partial Academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day